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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/617,272	07/10/2003	Yoshimitsu Arai	032405.147	2473
25461	7590	02/28/2005	EXAMINER	
SMITH, GAMBRELL & RUSSELL, LLP SUITE 3100, PROMENADE II 1230 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. ATLANTA, GA 30309-3592			RESTIFO, JEFFREY J	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3618	

DATE MAILED: 02/28/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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<i>R</i> Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/617,272	ARAI ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Jeffrey J. Restifo	3618	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM
THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 July 2003.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 10 July 2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 4-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Felzer (US 3,827,525 A).

Felzer discloses a vehicle comprising a floor panel defining a floor tunnel portion 40 that extends rearwardly and inclined at the front for a power transmitting device (or engine with transmission) 36, as shown in figures 1-5.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Felzer (US 3,827,525 A) and in further view of Ito (US 5,203,749 A).

Felzer discloses a vehicle comprising a floor panel defining a floor tunnel portion 40 that extends rearwardly and inclined at the front for a power transmitting device (or engine with transmission) 36 each inherently in a casing, as shown in figures 1-5.

Felzer does not disclose the input shaft as being above the output shaft. Ito does disclose a transmission comprising an input shaft 11 as being above the output shaft 12, as shown in figure 1. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have provided the vehicle of Felzer with the transmission of Ito in order to shorten the length of the transmission.

5. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Felzer and Ito, as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Massel (US 5,193,415 A).

Neither Felzer nor Ito disclose a projecting portion on the transmission casing. Massel does disclose a projecting portion 14 on a transmission casing 22 extending upward and in the longitudinal direction for protecting the transmission, as shown in figures 1-2. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have provided the vehicle of Felzer as modified by Ito with the projection portion of Massel in order to further protect the transmission from damage in a collision.

6. Claims 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Felzer, as applied to claim 4 above.

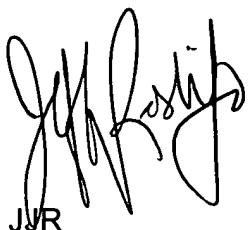
Felzer does not explicitly disclose auxiliary equipment under the floor tunnel. The use of turbochargers and/or exhaust catalysts are conventional in the art and it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have provided the vehicle of Felzer with a turbocharger and/or exhaust catalyst in order to increase horsepower and decrease emissions, as is commonly applied in the art.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeffrey J. Restifo whose telephone number is (703) 305-0579. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (10:00-6:00), alternate Friday off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Christopher P. Ellis can be reached on (703) 305-0168. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



JJR

A handwritten signature of Jeffrey J. Restifo, consisting of stylized initials and a surname. Below the signature, the initials "JJR" are handwritten in a smaller, bold font.

Jeffrey J. Restifo
Examiner
Art Unit 3618